

CHAPTER 7

BOATING SAFETY

1) RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY, STANDARDS, AND BOATING CLASSES

Information concerning Federal equipment requirements for recreational boats is contained in the pamphlet **"Federal Requirements and Safety Tips for Recreational Boats"** available at the nearest Coast Guard or Coast Guard Auxiliary Activity, as well as retail marine dealers.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary and the U.S. Power Squadron offer courses in basic seamanship, sailing, and navigation. These courses are available to anyone and range in length from one to thirteen lessons. There is a small charge for materials in some classes. In addition, a home study course is available from each State within the District. Boating safety education courses are also available on the Internet.

For information about Coast Guard Auxiliary and Power Squadron Classes in your area, call the Boating Safety Course line at 1-800-336-2628. To obtain a State boating course, contact the State where you boat (see section 2 for addresses). To receive safe boating literature, please write to:

Commander (oax-n)
Eleventh Coast Guard District
Coast Guard Island, BLDG. 21
Alameda, CA 94501-5100
(510) 437-3313
www.cgaux.org/cgauxweb/public/pubframe.htm

Commander (oax-s)
Eleventh Coast Guard District
P. O. Box 81 BLDG. 39
Terminal Island
San Pedro, CA 90731-0208
(800) 869-7245 Hotline
(310) 732-7286 Answering Machine

US Power Squadron
1504 Blue Ridge Rd
P O Box 30423
Raleigh NC 27622
(800) SEA-SKIL
(800) 732-7545

For Boating Safety questions contact the Eleventh Coast Guard District Recreational Boating Safety Specialist at (510) 437-5364, or write to the following address:

Office of Boating Safety (G-OPB)
US Coast Guard Headquarters
Washington DC 20593-0001

Or call the Navigation Information Service or the U.S. Coast Guard Infoline: (800) 368-5647.

****NOTE:** Call the U.S. Coast Guard Infoline for information on boating safety recalls, to report possible defects in boats, to comment on USCG boarding procedures, for answers to specific boating safety questions, or for boating safety literature.

2) BOAT ACCIDENT REPORTING

A boat operator involved in an accident must provide his or her name, address and vessel registration number to any other involved parties. In the case of a death or disappearance, the accident must be reported immediately to the Coast Guard, or local law enforcement officials.

A written report of a boating accident must be made when:

1. A person dies, disappears, or is injured and requires medical treatment beyond first aid.
2. Total damage to all vessels involved and other property is more than \$2000, or there is a complete loss of a vessel.

This report must be made within 48 hours of the accident in cases involving a disappearance or death that occurs within 24 hours of the accident. In all other incidents where a written report is required, the report must be made within 5 to 10 days of the accident, depending on the State in which the accident occurred.

SAFE BOATING IS NO ACCIDENT !

Boating Accident Report forms are available through local law enforcement agencies. They may also be obtained by from the State in which the accident occurred. Failure to comply with the above requirements may be punishable by a fine or imprisonment or both.

State Addresses:

Arizona:	Arizona Game & Fish Dept. 2221 W. Greenway Road Phoenix, Arizona 85023 (602) 789-3383
California:	Department of Boating and Waterways 2000 Evergreen Street Sacramento CA 95815-3831 (916) 263-8189
Nevada:	Division of Wildlife Law Enforcement Division 1100 Valley Road Reno, NV 89512 (775) 688-1542
Utah	Boating Coordinator Division of Parks and Recreation 1594 W. North Temple St. Suite 116, Box 146001 Salt Lake City, UT 84114-6001 (801) 538-7341

3) FLOAT PLANS

A Float Plan is an itinerary of your planned trip. It is a voluntary, but highly recommended part of your preparations for a voyage. At a minimum you should include all of your scheduled ports of call, the time you expect to arrive and depart from each port, and the time you expect to return to your homeport. Phone numbers, the radio channels/stations you expect to guard, and any other means of contacting you on your voyage are other helpful pieces of information to include in your float plan. An example of a float plan is included at the end of this chapter. Float plans cannot be filed with the Coast Guard. You should leave your float plan with someone reliable to whom you can report your safe arrival, and who will notify the Coast Guard should they fail to receive notification of your arrival. If you change your plans, immediately contact the person you left your float plan with, and update them with the pertinent changes.

An immediate report must be made to the Coast Guard about any vessel reported overdue which is subsequently located, so that search efforts may be terminated.

4) PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES

- a) Boats sixteen (16) feet or over in length: One Type I, II, III, or V (wearable) for each person on board and one Type IV (throwable) in each boat (Exception: canoes and kayaks need not carry a Type IV). Type V "hybrid" PFDs must be worn to meet Federal PFD Regulations.
- b) Boats less than sixteen (16) feet in length and all canoes and kayaks: One Type I, II, III, or V for each person on board.
- c) All states within the Eleventh District require that PFDs be worn by children of specific ages under certain conditions. Also, states require operators of personal watercraft to wear PFDs. Check with state safe boating officials for state specific PFD requirements.

Type I - (OFF-SHORE)

Type I PFD is an approved device designed to turn an unconscious person in the water from a face downward position to a vertical or slightly backward position. Adult sized Type I PFDs must have at least 22 pounds of buoyancy; child sizes must provide at least 11 pounds of buoyancy. Recommended for offshore cruising; Acceptable for all size boats.

Type II - (NEAR-SHORE)

A Type II PFD is an approved device designed to turn an unconscious person in the water from a face down position to a vertical or slightly backward position and to have at least 15.5 pounds of buoyancy. Recommended for closer, near-shore cruising; Acceptable for all size boats.

Type III - (FLOTATION AID)

A Type III PFD is an approved device designed to allow a conscious person to place himself or herself in a face-up position and to have at least 15.5 pounds of buoyancy. While having the same buoyancy as Type II, the Type III has a lesser turning ability to allow for a comfortable design for water activities such as water skiing. Recommended for in-water sports, or on lakes, impoundments, and close inshore operation; Acceptable for all size boats.

Type IV - (THROWABLE DEVICE)

A Type IV PFD is an approved device designed to be thrown to a person in the water and not worn. It is designed to have at least 16.5 pounds of buoyancy. Required as a throwable device for boats 16 feet and over in length except canoes and kayaks.

SAVE A LIFE - WEAR YOUR PFD !

Type V - (SPECIAL USE DEVICE)

Type V PFDs are designed and approved for restricted activities such as sail boarding or commercial whitewater rafting. These PFDs are only acceptable when used in the sport for which they were designed. The label on a Type V will tell you what activity or use it is approved for, what restrictions or limitations apply and its performance type. Be aware that a Type V approved only for "commercial use" may not be used for recreational purposes. Some Type V PFDs (hybrids) are approved as a replacement for a Type I, II, or III device as noted on the PFD label. Hybrid PFDs must be worn when underway to be acceptable.

Coast Guard Approval

Coast Guard approval is shown by a stencil marking or tag on the PFD. This tag or marking shows the name and address of the manufacturer and the Coast Guard approval number. It also shows the amount of flotation in the device and the PFD Type (I, II, III, IV, V). If the PFD is badly torn, damaged, rotted, punctured, or otherwise unserviceable, it no longer meets legal requirements.

5) PACIFIC OCEAN WHALE WATCHING

Encounters between whales and boaters have become a common occurrence along the California coast during the gray whale migration **from January through April** of each year. The National Marine Fisheries Service has established whale-watching guidelines for boat operators to protect gray whales from potential harassment. When in sight of whales:

- a) Do not cross the path of whales.
- b) Do not restrict the normal movement or behavior of the whales.
- c) Maintain a distance of at least 100 yards from the whales.
- d) Avoid excessive speed or sudden changes in course or speed.

The Federal Whale Watching Guidelines along with information on gray whale conservation, suggestions for boat handling near gray whales, and a description of common whale behavior is available from:

The Oceanic Society Expeditions
Fort Mason Center, Bldg. E
San Francisco, CA 94123
Phone: (415) 441-1105

6) VESSEL SAFETY CHECK

In addition to providing boating classes, the Coast Guard Auxiliary and U.S. Power Squadron will conduct a Vessel Safety Check (VSC) of your boat. The CME is a free check of your boat's equipment to ensure it meets state and federal safety related requirements plus additional standards recommended by the Auxiliary. **There is no cost for this service and no report of deficiencies is sent to any law enforcement agency.** A vessel awarded the VSC decal will have met the following Coast Guard Auxiliary standards:

a) **Numbering:** The boat's number is permanently attached to each side of the forward half of the vessel (bow) and no other numbers are displayed there. The numbers read left to right; are plain, vertical block characters; of a color contrasting with the background; distinctly visible and readable; and not less than 3 inches in height. A space or a dash separates letters from numbers.

b) **Personal Flotation Devices:** PFD's are Coast Guard approved, in good condition, and of suitable size for the wearer. Boats less than 16 feet are equipped with one PFD for each person on board. Boats 16 feet and over are equipped with one for each person plus one throwable.

c) **Fire Extinguishers:** All extinguishers display either a Coast Guard approval number or an Underwriters Laboratory rating of 5 BC or higher. VSC's exceed the federal examinations by requiring that all vessels carry a minimum of one B-1 fire extinguisher.

d) **Ventilation:** Closed compartment engines are properly ventilated.

e) **Backfire Flame Arrester:** The gasoline inboard motor is equipped with a Coast Guard approved means of backfire flame control.

f) **Sound Producing Device:** The boat carries some sort of sound signaling device capable of a 4 second blast audible for a half mile.

g) **Navigation Lights:** Vessels less than 16 feet in length are not required to have navigation lights. However, if the boat is equipped with them they must be properly displayed.

h) **Visual Distress Signal:** The boat carries Coast Guard approved VDS.

THE REMAINING VSC REQUIREMENTS HAVE NO CORRESPONDING FEDERAL REGULATIONS:

i) **Fuel Tank and Lines:** Fuel tanks and lines are free of corrosion, properly secured, made of sturdy non-breakable material and in good working condition.

j) **Anchor and Anchor lines:** The boat is equipped with an adequate anchor and line of suitable size and length.

k) **Alternate Propulsion:** If the boat is less than 16 feet in length it carries a means of alternate propulsion. A paddle, oar, or other suitable device meets this requirement.

l) **De-watering Device:** The boat carries at least one effective manual de-watering device (bucket, can, scoop, etc.).

m) **Fire Extinguisher Placement:** Fire extinguisher mounted in an accessible location.

n) **General Condition:** The vessel is found to be seaworthy and in overall good condition.